



JONATHAN E. FIELDING, M.D., M.P.H.
Director and Health Officer

CYNTHIA A. HARDING, M.P.H.
Chief Deputy Director

313 North Figueroa Street, Room 708
Los Angeles, California 90012
TEL (213) 240-8156 • FAX (213) 481-2739

www.publichealth.lacounty.gov



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Gloria Molina
First District

Mark Ridley-Thomas
Second District

Zev Yaroslavsky
Third District

Don Knabe
Fourth District

Michael D. Antonovich
Fifth District

June 11, 2013

To: Each Supervisor

From: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H. *JE Fielding*
Director and Health Officer

SUBJECT: CONTAMINATED FOOD PRODUCT/HEPATITIS A CASES

This is an update on the Department of Public Health's (DPH) response efforts regarding the contaminated food product and related Hepatitis A cases. The last update memo was sent to your Board on June 3, 2013.

Disease Investigation

On Friday, May 31, 2013, DPH was notified of a contaminated food product that was tied to cases of Hepatitis A. "Townsend Farms Organic Antioxidant Blend" frozen berry and pomegranate mix sold at Costco has been identified to be the contaminated source that has resulted in some people contracting Hepatitis A. As of the date of this memo, a total of 87 cases of Hepatitis A resulting from consumption of the contaminated food product have been identified in the United States. In California, there are 33 cases, with 11 cases hospitalized. To date, there have been no deaths. In Los Angeles County, six cases have been confirmed, with one suspect case. Three of the confirmed six cases have been or are currently hospitalized.

DPH is continuing to conduct surveillance and work with the medical community to identify any additional cases. Additionally, DPH will continue to work with the State and federal agencies to monitor this situation and respond as necessary.

Food Product Recall

On June 5, 2013, Townsend Farms issued a voluntary recall of the identified contaminated product. This continues to be the only product implicated in this investigation. The Federal Drug Administration is taking the lead on testing the product to identify the exact source that is causing the Hepatitis A (i.e. which berry) and will conduct investigations at the Townsend Farms plant.

Hepatitis A Vaccine

During the weekend of June 1- 2, 2013 from 10am to 4pm, DPH operated special vaccine clinics in the following seven DPH Health Centers: Antelope Valley Health Center, North Hollywood Health Center, Monrovia Health Center, Hollywood/Wilshire Health Center, Martin Luther King, Jr. Health Center, Whittier Health Center, and Curtis Tucker Health Center. These clinics provided both the Hepatitis A vaccine and the post-exposure prophylaxis. Over the weekend, a total of 488 persons received either Hepatitis A vaccination or IG Post Exposure Prophylaxis (71 on Saturday and 417 on Sunday).

From June 3 – 7, 2013, DPH continued to operate special Hepatitis A vaccination clinics from 8:00 to 4:00 p.m. in the same seven DPH Health Centers. During this timeframe, DPH administered 387 doses of Hepatitis A vaccine and post-exposure prophylaxis. Additionally, DPH fielded 169 phone calls with questions regarding the contaminated food product and the Hepatitis A vaccine.

As of June 10, 2013, DPH discontinued special Hepatitis A vaccine clinics. This decision was based on the decrease in demand for the vaccine. However, DPH will continue to offer vaccine at DPH Health Centers during the normal business hours.

On June 5, 2013, Costco began robot-calls to offer free Hepatitis A vaccine or reimbursement for vaccine costs to customers who brought in a receipt of purchase of the contaminated product. DPH determined that five Costco stores throughout Los Angeles County are offering the vaccine.

Alerting the Public

DPH will continue to work to keep the public informed on the contaminated product and the risks. To date, DPH has issued press releases in English and Spanish, posted pertinent information on DPH's website (publichealth.lacounty.gov) and provided information to 2-1-1 to respond to possible questions from the public.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please let me know.

JEF:ch

c: Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors